

Hon. Frank Oliver

TO THE

Edmonton Electors



On Reciprocity with U.S.A.

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Before an audience of four thousand persons, completely filling the great auditorium of the Thistle Rink, the Hon. Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, on Wednesday evening, September 5th, delivered one of the most notable addresses of his long public career. In the face of an organized attempt to disturb the meeting, he held the almost unbroken attention of the immense audience for nearly two hours, while he gave a statesmanlike exposition of the policy of the Liberal government in regard to reciprocity, disposed in a thoroughly satisfactory manner of the insinuations of boodle and graft which have been made against him, and discussed, as a private citizen, the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway scheme, pointing out its deficiencies and outlining plans for the development of northern Alberta by railroad construction of a more reasonable character. In his speech he touched upon all the main questions of the campaign, and with telling effect took up one by one the various allegations which have been made against him by his opponents and did not leave them until the great audience gave evidence of satisfaction with his answers by tremendous and prolonged cheering. It was a great personal triumph for the Minister of the Interior. A better expression of confidence, or more marked display of loyalty from his constituents could not have been desired by any member of any representative body in a democratic country.

The noteworthiness of the occasion was added to by an eloquent address on the reciprocity question by the Hon. A. L. Sifton, premier of Alberta. Premier Sifton advanced most convincing arguments in support of the agreement for free trade in natural products with the United States. He also in his address dealt effectively, though at less length, with the navy question, and the control by Alberta and Saskatchewan of their natural resources as promised by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The addresses of both the Hon. Frank Oliver and Premier Sifton were characterized by expressions of the highest regard for the welfare of the British Empire. The dual alliance of Borden and Bourassa to effect, by fair means or foul, the overthrow of Laurier received from both speakers the most scathing denunciation. That Borden should campaign Ontario with the cry that Laurier was disloyal, and should at the same time work hand in hand with Bourassa, who was seeking to inflame the mind of French-Canada with the cry that Laurier was too British, was held up as a concrete example of political hypocrisy of the worst kind. In their mad effort to destroy the Laurier government they were ready to set race against race and to disrupt Canada by enkindling anew the fires of old dissensions. They, and not the Liberal party who sought to build up the Empire by strengthening Canada in material wealth through increase of trade, were guilty of the treason against Canada and the Empire of which they accused their opponents.

At eight o'clock last night, half an hour before the opening of the meeting every chair in the hall was occupied and the gallery in the rear well filled. Those who came later had to find standing space in the rear of the hall. The chair was taken by ex-Mayor Lee and with him on the platform besides the two speakers were a number of prominent Liberals of Edmonton and members of the provincial legislature. Premier Sifton, who spoke first, had finished his address by nine o'clock.

Attempt to Disturb.

The attempt to disturb the meeting was disclosed as soon as Mr. Oliver rose to speak. At this early hour members of the audience scattered here and there through the hall noisily began to take their departure. Under this interruption, Mr. Oliver was compelled to speak for fully a quarter of an hour, but annoying as it was, it did not succeed in its purpose of distracting the attention of the audience, and by the time the minister of the interior came to the more important part of his address, the interruption had entirely ceased.

When Mr. Oliver had finished his forceful argument on the reciprocity agreement, establishing beyond question that it was a measure in the best interests of Canada as a whole, and also in the interests of the Empire, he turned his attention to the personal insinuations and local questions which have been imported into the campaign by his opponents in the hope of doing harm to his candidature. He first considered the insinuations of boodle and graft. Defining "boodle" as the appropriation to one's own uses or the dishonest expenditure of campaign funds, Mr. Oliver issued a challenge which electrified the audience. He said:

THROWS OUT CHALLENGE

"I want any one of all this audience of four thousand persons to stand up here tonight and say when, or where or how I caused to be paid or authorized to be paid to any one of them any consideration except for legitimate and honest services."

Dead silence for the space of some seconds greeted this ringing challenge. Then the silence was broken by a

great outburst of cheering.

"I want any man in this country from Red River to the Rocky Mountains," continued Mr. Oliver, "to say now if he ever got from me a favor, or promise, or threat of withholding favor, or right, because of his vote or influence."

A Complaint Answered.

At this point an individual arose from the audience and walked forward to the platform with a written complaint. It was a story of two men who worked three years ago at the time of the general election in a construction camp on the little river near Lesser Slave Lake. The complaint was that these men had been dismissed without receiving their wages and because they had failed to vote for Mr. Oliver. The man presenting the complaint was acting for an acquaintance. Mr. Oliver pointed out that the work on which the men in question were engaged was being done under the Department of Public Works and that he consequently had no responsibility in the case at all. As for an alleged agent who sought to force the men to vote for him, Mr. Oliver had never heard of him or seen him and never expected to. It was true that the engineer in charge of the work had been brought to his notice as not fitted for his position, and as a result of Mr. Oliver's representations to the Department of Public Works he was no longer occupying that position.

The Insinuation of Graft.

Referring to the insinuation of graft on his part in connection with the granting of half a million acres of land in Saskatchewan to the C.N.R., Mr. Oliver sketched the history of this transaction beginning with the land grant of half a million acres of Manitoba land east of the Red river and "fairly fit for settlement" to the Manitoba and South Easterly Railway. The charter of this company had been taken over by the C.N.R., but when that company made its application for the land grant under the order-in-council, it was found that so much land fairly fit for settlement was not available east of the Red river. The whole question had been referred to the Department of Justice and the Minister held that the right of the railway under the order-in-council

was still valid. Mr. Oliver accordingly recommended the granting of the land in Saskatchewan. He himself had asked for the investigation into this insinuation, and proposed to ask for a resumption of the inquiry by parliament if elected on September 21st.

The McGillicuddy Charges.

In reference to the charges made by McGillicuddy, Mr. Oliver stated that what was in or was not in his private bank account was his own business and that of no one else. He would submit to no inquisitorial investigation. His rights as a private citizen he prized even above the honor conferred upon him by membership in the cabinet of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. "I have kept back nothing, I have apologized for nothing, nor do I intend to," declared Mr. Oliver, and this terse statement of his position was received with great applause.

The charge that he had been opposed to the development of the north country and by his action had hindered that development, Mr. Oliver regarded as a most serious one. But it was absolutely untrue. He then put before the audience the views he held on railroad construction in Edmonton's tributary territory. He pointed out that there was more immediate need of a railway to the Peace River country, where hundreds of settlers were already established than to the Fort McMurray country where there was scarcely a settler and not ten acres of ground under cultivation. A railway was more needed to the east, north of the Saskatchewan river to St. Paul de Metis than to Fort McMurray.

Other Railways First.

A railway would be built to Fort McMurray some day, but these others should come first. Edmonton in securing from the government a line to Fort McMurray, guaranteed to the extent of \$370,000 per annum in the payment of five per cent interest on nearly \$7,000,000 of bonds, would be receiving her share of railroad expenditure for a long time to come. When a line was badly wanted to the Peace River country, or elsewhere, she would have to wait her turn again. Then the bonds of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway had been

guaranteed to the extent of \$20,000 a mile for 350 miles. Other railways were being built in Alberta on a guarantee of \$13,000 per mile and interest at four per cent. At this ordinary rate of \$13,000 and four per cent, a railway 700 miles in length could have been built. At this rate, no doubt, the required arrangements could have been made with the G.T.P. or C.N.R. and in addition to 300 miles of railroad to Fort McMurray, 100 miles could have been built to St. Paul de Metis, 100 to Fort Assiniboine, and 100 to Whitecourt, leaving an additional 100 miles for whatever other section of the country most needed it.

PREMIER SIFTON

Premier Sifton in opening his address, declared that the splendid audience he saw before him was an evidence at once of the great strength of Liberalism in Edmonton and of the wonderful growth of the city under the Laurier government. He had had the privilege of attending the largest meeting ever held in Edmonton prior to 1896 when Sir Wilfrid Laurier was put in power, and the contrast came home to him.

For fifty years it had been the policy of both political parties to advocate reciprocity with the United States. Sir John A. Macdonald had placed a standing offer of reciprocity in the statutes of Canada and ever since it had been urged by the leaders of the Conservative party. Only last December 1,000 farmers had gone from the west to Ottawa to ask for tariff reduction, and as a result of their requests the agreement was made and brought before the people for ratification. The policy whether good for the rest of Canada or not, was admittedly for the benefit of western Canada and every Canadian should vote for it.

Freer and Larger Markets.

The great advantages of reciprocity were the opening up of freer and larger markets. With these markets in a short time the prairies might have a population of millions instead of hundreds of thousands. The markets of Great Britain, said to be the best for Canada's products, were now open to Canada and would still be under

the reciprocity agreement.

While great benefit would accrue to Alberta from the opening up of the United States markets for its grain products and cattle products, there was another advantage which was frequently overlooked. In the areas of the Brazeau, Embarras and Kootenay west of Edmonton, lying along the eastern slope of the Rockies, there were immense deposits of the class of coal from which coke was made, and immediately south of the boundary were the largest smelting works in the world. These works now get their supply of coke from Pennsylvania and Indiana. With the duty of one dollar a ton taken off, in the valleys of the Rockies from Edmonton to the International boundary would soon grow up settlements of people engaging with profit in the coal industry.

Railways Not Afraid.

Despite their outcry against reciprocity, the three great railway companies of the Dominion were not afraid to do business with the States. The C.P.R. ran its feeders across the line. The Grand Trunk at the very start ran lines into Maine and Chicago as an outlet and inlet of traders. The C.N.R. had purchased a line to Duluth and other lines in the State of Minnesota. What was their motive? To benefit Minnesota. Dividends; this was their motive without a doubt. There were more railways owned by Canadian corporations in the United States than would build another Canadian transcontinental and yet no one found fault with the railways on the score of loyalty. If it was good business for the corporations to do this, might it not be good business for the farmers and ranchers to follow the same policy?

Could Edmonton find any fault with the government in the building of the two latest transcontinentals? The location of the railways was not an accident. They went where they did because the people of the western country and the member for Edmonton in particular used their influence in getting them. And if any one district in Canada had a right to give credit to the government for what it had done, that district was the Edmonton federal district.

Provincial Rights.

People of the west should support the Laurier government because it had given assurance that the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan would be placed on the same footing as other provinces in regard to their natural resources. There was no difference of opinion as to the benefit of this fuller control of natural resources, and because the government promised it, it was worthy of support.

The cry of disloyalty had been raised against the Laurier government in the elections of 1900, 1904, 1908 and now in 1911. It was no new thing. But in the election of 1908 they were accused of disloyalty and in addition charged with courting the ruin of Canada by offering a British preference. And now they find fault with us because, they say, we are going back on the British preference. They say we are disloyal. Should we become more prosperous than we are we would be anxious to be annexed. And yet Canada had gone through times when the country felt the pinch of poverty and had remained loyal. Of what sort of stuff did the opponents of the reciprocity agreement think that Canadians of today were made?

Defence of the Empire.

The Liberal government, Premier Sifton declared, was the first ever to send a man or spend a dollar in the defence of the Empire. It had started to build a navy for the country because Canada had arrived at the stage of national development where it could afford to do so, and to perform its part in maintaining the integrity of the Empire.

True loyalty to Canada and the Empire, Premier Sifton declared, consisted in building up the prosperity of the country that every cultivable acre might be tilled and so that instead of eight million, eighty million might inhabit the Dominion.

The government was now offering the people what it had striven long to attain, and what the people had demanded. It was now the duty and privilege of every true Canadian to vote for reciprocity.

Premier Sifton had full confidence that Alberta would return seven members to support the government of

Sir Wilfrid Laurier in its great work of upbuilding Canada, and thereby strengthening and consolidating the British Empire.

MR. OLIVER'S SPEECH

Mr. Oliver said: It is some months ago since I had the privilege of addressing an audience in this hall on the subject of reciprocity. Since that time events have occurred which have brought the question to the people for decision. Since that time much discussion has taken place but I am bound to say that although I have given careful attention to all that I have been able to read and hear I am as far away as I was then from hearing any intelligent reason why the people of this country should reject the proposal.

As Premier Sifton has said, it has been the work of the Liberal party in power to secure the filling up of this country. The advent of people made necessary the advent of railways. The great principle of railway expansion and railway competition has been the policy of the Liberal government and the result of that policy is the success and prosperity, not only of the West, but of the whole of Canada. The increase of population, the increase of production, the increase of railway facilities, having been achieved are not the end. They are but the beginning, and production, and people and the means of reaching markets with products demand a policy looking to the opening of better and wider markets. The proposal of reciprocity in natural products with the United States is simply the following out of the well-defined policy of the Liberal government in its efforts towards the progress and success of the country. Do we in this country need more markets. Surely we need more and better markets, as every producer will say. We are only at the beginning of production here. We produced 100 million bushels of wheat last year. We hope to have 200 millions this year, and our market today is Great Britain. Great Britain buys from all the world at the present 200 million bushels of wheat, and if we, the people of these western provinces, have not made a stupendous mistake, if we have not bought and built and mortgaged under a wrong impression, if we are not going to land in difficulty and disaster, that production of wheat

which this year we hope will be 200 million bushels will within the next few years be four hundred or five hundred million bushels.

Larger Market Needed.

I ask you then, do we not need a market? If this country has the possibilities that we think it has, that we believe it has, and if its progress is going to continue at the present rate, the government would be derelict in its duty, would be lacking in the foresight displayed by the ordinary business man, if it did not look near and far for markets, wherever they are to be found. And if today we are debarred from the markets of the United States by a prohibitive duty against our wheat, our barley and our cattle, and if under a fair arrangement these duties against our products against our growing surplus, can be wiped out, what is the business of the government of Canada if it is not to secure the wiping out of these duties? (Cheers.)

Wider Market, Less Taxation.

I said, if they can secure the abrogation of these duties on fair and reasonable terms. And what are the terms under this arrangement? It would be fair to say that the privilege of free access to the markets of the United States for our ever increasing surplus would be worth many thousands and hundreds of thousands in hard cash to the people of Canada. We could afford to pay a very considerable tax if called upon to do so in order to get the advantage of these markets. The price we have to pay is a reduction of our taxation. We get the advantage of a wider market at the cost of a decreased taxation on our own people. (Cheers.)

Now the Liberal government was elected to power in 1896 on a policy of reduced taxation. That is the policy upon which they were elected. It was on that policy that the majority of the people voted, and the first important act of their term of office was to make a reduction in taxation, a substantial reduction in general taxation and, under the British preference, a more substantial reduction of the tax on British goods.

Further Reduction Asked.

That was some fourteen years ago, and it is not news to you, ladies and gentlemen, that since that time many of our people have been impatient and have demanded further reduction. If there is one criticism more than an-

other that has been levelled against the Liberal government it is the criticism that they have not fulfilled their election pledges to reduce the taxation upon the people of Canada. Well, today, ladies and gentlemen, they are before you with a proposition for a further reduction of the burden of taxation on this country, and the question for you is, are you going to endorse that reduction of taxation and that freer trade which has always been the policy of the Liberal party and the policy under which the prosperity that this country today enjoys has been unquestionably achieved.

Since I spoke here before I have heard objections that I had not heard then. May I touch on one or two of them? I have heard my opponent in this contest exhort the farmers that they should not support the proposal for better prices in the United States because after they had become used to these better prices the United States would some time withdraw from the arrangement and they would fall back to their present condition. If my friend speaks for the party whose candidate he is, they are urging upon intelligent men that they should not sell their wheat for eighty cents per bushel this year because next year they may have to sell it for seventy cents. (Laughter and cheers).

No Fear of Railways.

We are told that the railways of Canada will be injured because of increased trade between north and south. Do you know that we are doing some trade north and south today? Half of the total trade of the Dominion of Canada today is done with the United States, and speaking of railways, while we have just one from east to west there are fifty passenger trains per day that leave Canada for the United States and as many passenger trains return daily to Canada from that country. If Canada is going to be ruined by trade with the United States then Canada is ruined already, and her railways are ruined. Surely if we are doing that amount of trade with the United States today we shall not be hurt if, by the removal of the tariff on natural products between the two countries, that trade should become more profitable. (Cheers). If we make a certain profit on a certain amount of trade, and if by the removal of a barrier to that trade we can increase the profits from it, wherein lies the possibility of

injury to us or to any legitimate industry in the country? But, they say, the railways will suffer. Well, ladies and gentlemen, the railways will not lose any trade if the prices are as good at the end of their present respective runs as they would be in some new direction, and one very good way to make these prices as good is for the companies to shave a little off their rates. (Cheers). And so the objection that under the reciprocity arrangement our railway companies will have to do business at less cost is to my mind one of the strongest reasons why we should support the arrangement.

Railways Will Protect Themselves.

The railways may safely be left to take care of themselves. It is our business to take care of ourselves. (Cheers) But I do not want you to think that in any way it is the desire or the intention of the government to injure the railways or to injure any legitimate enterprise in Canada. We believe that the reciprocal trade arrangement will benefit the railways and every legitimate interest. Upon what do the railways depend? Upon what do the banking institutions and commercial interests depend? Do not they all absolutely and unquestionably depend upon the profits of the farmers? And if under reciprocity the profits of the farmer can be increased is it not certain that the production will correspondingly increase? And is it not also certain as that light follows day that the railways instead of having less will have more business; that the banks will have more business and that the commercial houses will have more business? And last, but not least, our manufacturing enterprises will benefit as greatly and as certainly by the conditions which benefit the farmer. (Applause.)

Great Object of Laurier Govt.

"I want to make you sure of this, that the Laurier government, the great object of its leader being to build up here a United Canada, to bring together in common cause all races and sections and all interests, having succeeded during this period of fifteen years, is not now departing from that policy or principle; that the principle of the good of all is strongly embodied in this reciprocity arrangement as it is in any other other part of the successful policy of the Laurier government. And I want to say to you that there is a feature of the op-

position to this arrangement that is worthy of the most careful attention. It is important that we should have the best markets we can get. It is important that our people should increase in material prosperity, but it is more important that Canadian national sentiment should be cultivated throughout the whole of this broad Dominion (Cheers). That is the policy of the Laurier government. (Cheers) But may I be permitted, ladies and gentlemen, to bring to your attention tonight, two weeks before the day upon which this question is to be decided, the fact that that is not the policy of their opponents. May I bring to your attention the fact that while Mr. Borden is opening . . . "

Borden Supporters Heard.

The name of the leader of the opposition was greeted noisily by some of his supporters, who occupied a section of the hall. Mr. Oliver repeated the statement but was again interrupted by these gentlemen, who cheered at the mention of Mr. Borden's name. The Minister of the Interior good humoredly repeated the sentence in the same form several times, smilingly recommencing as each outburst ceased. After three or four attempts he was able to continue.

If his friends who are here tonight will permit me I was about to remark that while Mr. Borden is campaigning throughout the English-speaking provinces of Canada attacking Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the ground of disloyalty to the Empire, Mr. Bourassa and Mr. Monk are campaigning in the French-speaking provinces of Quebec against Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the ground that he is too loyal to the Empire. I want to give you, ladies and gentlemen, here, tonight, incontrovertible evidence that this is by arrangement between these two sections of that party. May I read to you a dispatch from Montreal which is dated June 30th and is printed in the Winnipeg Telegram of July 1st, 1911, the Conservative organ in that city."

Another Interruption.

Mr. Oliver was again interrupted at this point "I know that the large majority of the people here would like to hear this dispatch," he remarked, and his words were greeted with cheering which drowned the noise made by his interrupters and revealed the sentiment of the meeting in so unmistakable a manner that they were at once silenced. The dis-

patch which he read was as follows: "It looks now as if the opposition will divide the province at the coming election. It can be safely said, however, that out of the 42 counties in the Montreal district, over 30 will be straight Conservative. It is also a well known fact that although the Bourassa wing is the noisy element, his party would not have been able to move had it not been for the support they received from the old wing of the party, and the knowledge of this fact will keep the reasonable wing of the Nationalists at least on friendly terms with the men who are behind Mr. Borden in the province."

A Serious Question."

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," continued Mr. Oliver, "I give you the statement appearing authoritatively in the newspaper organ of the Conservative party published in the city of Winnipeg, of an alliance with the Nationalists of Quebec led by Mr. Borden. May I say to you that the question whether this country is to be divided into sections, whether the English are to be set against the French and the French against the English, as is happening today, on the authority of his own organ, under the leadership and with the cognizance of Mr. Borden, is a more serious issue than the reciprocity issue (Cheers). This country has enjoyed great success and prosperity since 1896, and since 1896 the policy of union, the policy of loyalty to Canada and to the Empire, under the leadership of Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been one of the great factors contributing to this success. (Cheers). If Canada, the same Canada, did not achieve the same success in the previous years, under the administration of Sir John Macdonald, who is recognized as having been a great statesman, one of the reasons is that up to the time of the advent of the Laurier government this country, from the date of Confederation until 1896, was divided into two sections, English and French. And is it not a fact that in 1895 this country was on the verge of civil war between these two sections of the population?"

Same Policy as 15 Years Ago.

And as the climax of a deliberate policy of setting English against French and French against English the same party, after fifteen years, are again organizing to bring about the same result, if perchance they

may attain power thereby. They talk of treason against the Empire. I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, is not such action treason against Canada and the Empire (Loud cheering). Are you going to endorse by your votes the candidate of that party? (Cries of No, No.) And above all will you endorse that policy when brought before you with the waving of the British flag and scoffs at the loyalty of the government. I am confident that you will put in their right places the men who would thus trade on your loyalty. I have had the honor of representing the district of Edmonton for many years. I have reason to have faith in the loyalty and good sense of the people of Edmonton, and I verily believe that when they know, as they cannot help but know between now and election day, the attempt that is being made in the name of the sacred sentiment of loyalty to win an election, I am satisfied that they will deal with the question absolutely upon its merits. (Cheers.)

Reciprocity Big Issue.

I have spoken to you of reciprocity. It is the issue of the campaign. But in voting for or against reciprocity the people must elect or defeat certain men. Under the British system of responsible government the men and the principle and the policy go together. And now may I say a word to you in regard to the man? I think I may appeal to you to endorse me when I say that I am not given to self-advertisement. (Hear, hear). I have not obtruded my personality into this contest to becloud the issue in any way. At the same time I have been honored with a measure of free advertisement that I must consider as a compliment. (Laughter). And only as my personality has been obtruded upon the electors, not by myself or my friends but by my opponents, may I take a little of your time, and I hope your fair attention, to deal with some of these matters which are personal to myself, but interesting to you in so far as I am a candidate for honors at your hands.

The Accusations.

"It will not be news to many here if I say that in divers and sundry manners I have been accused of being a boodler, a grafter and also that I have hindered development of the north. (Laughter.) These, I think, to save time, are the allegations which have been made with some considerable

vociferation and reiteration.

"Now, in regard to the question of my being a boodler Boodle, as I understand the word, is money improperly expended to carry elections, and a boodler is one who spends money improperly in connection with election. Now, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, there must always be some difference of opinion as between a proper and improper expenditure in connection with elections. There must necessarily be expense in connection with elections which some person has to bear. The question as to whether the expenditure is proper or not is the question as to whether it is boodler or not. Now, I have been interested in elections in this district ever since 1883, sometimes as a successful and sometimes as an unsuccessful candidate. But in every election, as in the one coming forward, there are expenditures that must be met by somebody or there cannot be a fair and reasonable appeal to the electors. There is always the hire of halls, as the hire of this hall tonight. There must be provision for addressing meetings. There must be expenditures for advertising. There are large and small sums that must be met, and I take it that these expenditures are recognized as legitimate and that they are not boodler.

The Minister's Challenge

There are probably in this hall 4,000 people, very largely voters, many of them residents of the city at the last federal election and some during every election in which I have been a candidate. And I want anyone of all this four thousand to stand up here now, tonight, and say when and where and how I ever paid or caused to be paid, or authorized to be paid, a dollar or part of a dollar to anyone for any consideration except legitimate and honest service. (Prolonged cheering).

"I have for the past six years held an important office, or position of administrative authority, as a member of the government at Ottawa. Necessarily I have had a measure of authority in my hands. I need not amplify on that, for any person whom I have had the privilege of meeting during my visits to Edmonton will bear witness that I am urged to exercise that authority in behalf of this, that or the other individual, to a degree that I hope I may be excused for saying is somewhat burdensome.

And I want anyone in this city or from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, to say when and where and how he ever got a favor or promise of a favor or the granting of a right from me, or if there was a hint of the withholding of a favor or right from him because of his vote or influence. (Prolonged cheering).

Best Possible Proof.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I know that the fact that nobody has responded to this challenge," said Mr. Oliver after a pause, "is not absolute proof. But, ladies and gentlemen, it is all the proof that any man can offer when he is required to prove a negative.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am a grafter. (Laughter). So they say. A grafter, if I rightly understand the term, is one who betrays a public trust for private profit. And in the same way I want to ask if there is any man or woman in this hall—and I have had official dealings with large numbers of those who are here—if they, of themselves or through anyone else, can give an instance where there was a hold-up or hand-out to the amount of one cent in regard to any administrative act of mine. Do not all speak at once. (Laughter and cheers).

Not Taken Seriously.

When the cheering subsided a man in the audience came forward and was invited by Mr. Oliver to the platform. "Mr. Chairman, he said, I have a paper here handed to me this evening by the author, and I cannot very well make out the writing on it." The audience was not disposed to take him very seriously though Mr. Oliver repeatedly urged that he be given a fair hearing. Finally, as he was unable to make himself heard, Mr. Oliver took the document and read as follows, subject to several interruptions when the amusement of the crowd manifested itself.

"Sept. 6th. Having the pleasure of an interview with the employee who worked on the Little River near Slave Lake some three years ago Mr. Oliver's representative, Mr. Darling, who acted as scrutineer at Oliver's election was particularly generous on that day. He ordered the men at breakfast table on that day to vote for F. Oliver. Their wages would be paid for the holiday which came on the 26th of October. Unfortunately some two men did not vote for the Hon. Frank. These men were let out shortly after

and paid some \$1 per day. The remainder of the men were paid \$50 to \$60 accordingly. Now, these men were not paid for the election day and never received one cent of the wages, and had to wait a few days before the work was through to get money to support their families. They left on the understanding that they would receive their checks at the bank without being discounted, but had it not been for the kind word of the assistant engineer these men would not have got any money. He spoke and went into the bank. Here was men paid all expenses from Edmonton and never received one cent. The district engineer whilst in camp promised these men that they should be paid in full. Now these men are short to this day ranging over three years, each man from \$5 to \$150. Who pocketed this money?"

(Signed)

W. LANE."

The conclusion of the reading was greeted with an outburst of laughter. When this had subsided Mr. Oliver stated that he knew the man whose signature was attached to the document. "He is a blacksmith," he said, "who works near the packing plant. He interviewed me on this subject the other night. In regard to this matter, as you are well aware, the improvements being done on the Lesser Slave Lake are done by the Public Works Department and not by The Interior Department. In my administrative capacity I have no more to do with these works or these men than I have with your conduct or your pay. As to the instructions by the officer in charge that the men should vote for me on that day, I never saw the man. I do not know who he is. I do not expect to see him. I do not believe he gave the order. And I may add that I defy any one to find any employer of labor whom I ever asked to give such an order. (Cheers.)

"As to the non-payment of the full wages of these men all I can say is that as the representative of the district, in which this work was done it appeared to me that the business was not managed in a business-like way, and as a result the engineer who was in charge is not now in the employ of the government."

Mr. Oliver's statement was greeted with enthusiastic applause. The man, however, showed no inclination to leave the platform and stated that he wished to address the gathering on the subject of reciprocity. The audience, however, refused to hear him.

"This gentleman has come forward," said Mr. Oliver, "and has been given a hearing. You are the judges as to whether what he had to say carries

the import suggested by his interruption. I ask him, 'Have you any knowledge of any act of graft on my part or under my instructions or for which I am responsible. If you know of any case, now is the time to state it. If you do not know of any such case I would respectfully ask you in the name of the audience to give place to the continuation of the proceedings.'"

The wishes of the audience were so obvious that the interrupter, having no charges to make, was obliged to leave the platform.

Mr. Oliver was greeted with cheers as he approached the front of the platform once more. "You have heard the response," he said, "to my request that any person who has any knowledge of boodle or graft with which my name is connected to come forward. You have heard the only response that has been made, and you see what value there is in it. (Laughter). It did not lack the motive, but it lacked the facts. I want to deal now with a matter in which there was a public insinuation of graft against myself. I have not hitherto dealt with this on a public platform because it was a matter which was brought to the attention of parliament and was the subject of investigation by a committee of parliament until dissolution. I propose, should I be elected, to ask for the resumption of that enquiry, because I think it is due to you who have honored me so long, as well as to myself, that even an insinuation, when it is definite enough, should be dealt with and disposed of in a proper manner. (Cheers). I will tell you the facts with regard to this transaction, and you will be the judges as to how graft could possibly occur in connection with it. I speak of the granting of some half million acres of land to the Canadian Northern Railway Co., being the land grant earned by the construction of the Manitoba South Eastern railway, running from Winnipeg south-easterly to the International boundary, close to the south-west angle of the Lake of the Woods. The insinuation — because there was no allegation—it was very carefully worded so as not to be actionable at law—was that the company was entitled to its land grant east of the Red River and that I recommended an order in council which gave them a grant west of the Red River, and the assertion is that because of the difference in value between the grant that was made and that which should have been made the Canadian Northern received a large profit, in which profit the insinuation is that I shared. Now the facts are these. The Manitoba South Eastern railway company were given a grant as other companies were by the late Conservative government, conditional upon the

construction of this piece of Railway.
Must Be Fairly Fit.

"And the principle that was followed in the granting of these lands was that as the lands were granted in the place of money as assistance to the construction of the railway the land must be fairly fit for settlement. This grant was made many years before the railway was constructed, but it was made by act of parliament and finally the railway was constructed and the company claimed their land. Between the time of the passing of the statute and the completion of the railway an order in council had been passed, which, while granting the company some privilege—I think extension of time for construction—assumed or directed that their land grant should be taken east of the Red River. When finally constructed the land grant was demanded and it was found that of the land fairly fit for settlement east of the Red River, part was in occupation, part deeded to Manitoba for swamp lands, part had been set aside for timber berths and part denuded of timber. The result was that the company refused to accept it, as not in accord with the terms of the act, and demanded land fairly fit for settlement. We were advised by the Department of Justice, our legal advisers, that the company was entitled to land of this character. Therefore, I drafted a recommendation authorizing the company to take their land grant in Saskatchewan. The company received only that to which they were entitled under the statute. I got not one cent out of it."

May I suggest that any of you who have had dealings with the Canadian Northern railway will bear me out when I say that that company does not give up good money unless it is compelled to. However, I should not intrude this matter upon this occasion as it has been under consideration by a committee of the House of Commons, but I think I am perhaps justified in laying the case before you to this degree merely for your information. But it is a matter that is properly one for consideration by a committee of Parliament and cannot be fairly or reasonably decided merely by platform or newspaper discussion. I may be allowed to say to you also that it was not someone else who asked for the investigation. I asked for it (cheers) and I propose to have it continued to a conclusion to satisfy you and everyone that what was done was done on the square and in the best interests of everybody concerned. (Renewed applause.)

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it has been made a matter of consideration by the public that a certain gentleman—well, beg the pardon of the audience—a certain man (laughter and applause) named McGillicuddy, has told Sir Wilfrid Laurier and several others that at a certain time I had placed to my credit in the Imperial bank in Edmonton, the sum of \$69,500. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have yet failed to realize in what way that was Mr. McGillicuddy's business, or the business of the premier or of anyone else except myself. If there is anyone here who thinks that any part of that money, or any other money that I have there or anywhere else, belongs to him, all he has to do is to get up and say so. (Laughter) And if he thinks, or anyone thinks, that any part of that money or any other money in my possession has been improperly expended by me, or with my authority, then it is for him to get up and say so. Now, if that money or any other money is to my credit, to my use and for my purposes, I say—and I say it to this audience to whom I am appealing for election—that that is my business and not Mr. McGillicuddy's business and not anyone else's business. And I will say further that if it is a fact that, because I hold a position of trust and responsibility as a member of the government and as your representative, I am to be deprived of the ordinary rights and privileges enjoyed by a private citizen, so that I must submit what is my business and mine only to inquisitorial examination on the demand of anybody, I want to say, much as I value the honor and the responsibility and the confidence of that position—I want to say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that the price is too high. (Cheers.) I value my right as an ordinary private citizen more than I do even the high honor conferred upon me by yourselves and the Liberal government. (Applause.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, the question is before you, and it is for you to say whether you agree with my opinions in regard to these matters or not. You are the only people who are entitled to give a decision. I have kept back nothing, and I have apologized for nothing—nor do I intend to

apologize. I hope, therefore, we understand each other clearly, so that if you vote for me on the 21st of September you vote for me as an ordinary private citizen, who believes first in minding his own business and next in leaving other people's business alone.

There is one other question that I wish to deal with. It also is a personal matter. It has nothing whatever to do with this contest. It is not even connected with Dominion politics. But it is an accusation made against me and used against me in this contest. May I be privileged to allude to it. (Cries of "Go ahead.")

I want to speak of the charge that I have been opposed and that by my action I have hindered the development of the north country. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I realize the serious nature of such a charge. This city is nothing if not progressive, nothing if not ambitious, and its progress and the realization of its ambition depends more upon the opening up of the north country than upon any other factor. When, therefore, a man who aspires to the responsibilities of public office as a representative of this place is alleged to have opposed or hindered the development of the north country he has to answer a very serious charge.

When I was here some months ago you will remember that a gentleman stood on the platform here and declared that I had intrigued against the Rutherford government, whose policy was the development of this north country by the construction of the Alberta & Great Waterways railway. I dealt with the accusation then in the only manner in which such an accusation should be dealt with. I will not trouble you further with that except to say that this accusation was false. My answer was made three months ago. The gentlemen who made the charge have had all the time since then to find their proof. So far it would appear that they have not found it, and the reason is that it does not exist. (Applause.)

I do not pretend, ladies and gentlemen, to be perfect—I am a very ordinary individual—but I do claim this: that I stand by my friends and that I

do not intrigue under any circumstances or conditions whatever, and that I never did. I will not discuss the downfall of the Rutherford government, but I want to put before you the views which I hold in regard to the attempt of that government to develop the northern country, and to say why, in my opinion, their attempt was not wisely directed and did not tend to the development of that country in the way most in the interest of the progress of this city and the surrounding country. You will understand that when we undertake the work of development—say the improvement of a farm—the value of our efforts must depend upon whether they are well or ill directed. If the farm is half prairie and half woods, and if, instead of putting the ploughshare into the prairie we direct all our efforts to clearing the wooded land and allow the prairie to lie idle, given over to the growth of weeds, we are not really developing that farm to the best advantage. I want to say to you that, in my humble judgment, the proposal which looked to the construction of a railway to Fort McMurray under the terms proposed was not a wisely directed attempt to develop the north country, and could not bring the best and quickest results in the development of this city. I hope I may be permitted to voice my opinion as a citizen of Edmonton. As such, may I, in my own defence, offer a criticism of the proposal that was made in the legislature here, and suggest to you what in my mind would have been more to the interest and advantage of the development and progress of Edmonton.

The question of railway development is a question of finance, and here in this province if we take our money or our credit for one purpose we have not got it to expend on some other purpose. And when we dip into our credit to the extent of seven and a half millions in order to build one railway, that appears to me to debar us from building some other railway, because our credit is depleted to that extent. If we had unlimited credit there would be no serious objection to the construction of the Great Waterways railway. I do not know that we have unlimited credit,

and I believe that it is a fact that in Edmonton, for the benefit of Edmonton, gets the credit of the province to the extent of seven and a half millions, the rest of the people of the province will say that that is Edmonton's share. If you want the credit of the province for the construction of some other railway it is likely that they will say to you, "Not just now."

Let me give you the figures of the bargain. We guarantee the bonds of the company for 350 miles at \$20,000 per mile at five per cent. interest. That means that we guarantee to pay out of the treasury and taxes of this province, until such time as the railway can earn a profit, the sum of \$370,000 per annum. Now this is a large sum, and cannot be taken out of the treasury year after year to build one railway for Edmonton if Edmonton is to come back successfully for another guarantee to build another railway.

There is another question. Was the route of the Great Waterways railway the route which would bring the quickest, most beneficial and most permanent advantage to the city of Edmonton. I think only one answer can be given to this question, and that in the negative. The route traversed settled country for fifty miles and for the balance of the distance there was practically not a settler. I have seen the country through which it would pass and it is a valuable country, but its value is not immediate. But take the country to the northwest—the Peace River country. (Applause.) There you have a country whose value is immediate, and the same length of railway that would give us connection with Fort McMurray, where there is not a population of one hundred persons and not ten acres of agricultural land, would have given us connection with the Grande Prairie country, the Spirit River country and the actual Peace River country at Dunvegan, where there are hundreds of settlers who have gone there, attracted by the character of the country and under circumstances and conditions that—while giving them all credit for their fine enterprise, are in many instances deplorable.

Waiting for Railway.

Besides, we have northwest of here, towards the Paddle river and the Athabasca river, hundreds of settlers. A road to the Peace River would have given facilities to those people who have been struggling through adverse conditions for years, and can do nothing but sit and wait for a railway.

The country to the north is good country, but it is not as attractive a field for railway enterprise as the Peace River. We have first to find the settlers and put them on the land. We would spend five or ten years before the country would be in the same position as the Grande Prairie and Peace River would be the moment the railway reaches Grande Prairie.

Am I then at fault in criticizing the government, as a private citizen, on this unwise expenditure to build a line to Fort McMurray? (Cries of "No").

Smaller Guarantees.

Other lines of railway are being built in Alberta on guarantees of \$13,000 a mile and four per cent interest. If we had been building this Fort McMurray railway on the same conditions as the C.N.R. line to Athabasca Landing or the Vegreville and Tofield-Calgary branches, we would have got that railway on a yearly expenditure of \$156,000 instead of \$370,000, which would have been a difference of \$214,000 per year to the province. At the ordinary railway rate of \$13,000 guarantee and four per cent interest we could have got 700 miles of railway at the same charge on the provincial treasury.

Assuming that the railroad to the Peace River would cost \$20,000 per mile, owing to difficulties of construction. If we had provided for this road at this rate, and the rate of interest four, instead of five, per cent, we could have built the road to the Peace River and had \$90,000 a year to spare. This would have given, in addition, \$13,000 per mile on a railway to the Athabasca Landing, and would even have given some aid for building fifty miles further to Lac La Biche.

But there are other parts of the province in need of railways as well as the Peace River. North of the Sas-

katchewan river and east, there are thousands of settlers, in the country reaching to St. Paul de Metis and beyond. These people isolated fifty, sixty and seventy miles from a railway with the Saskatchewan river to cross, what chance have they to be successful, to accomplish what they have gone out there to do?

A Better Bargain.

Now there is no doubt that the required arrangements could have been made with the G.T.P. or C.N.R. at a guarantee of \$13,000 per mile and four per cent interest to do our railroad building. This means we could have built 300 miles to Fort McMurray, 100 miles to St. Paul de Metis, 100 miles to Fort Assiniboine, 100 miles to Whitecourt, and another 100 miles in any direction at the same price of \$370,000 that we are now paying on the Fort McMurray line.

I ask you was this arrangement wise in view of the needs of the people east of here, west of here, and northwest of here, who are suffering and continuing to suffer for want of railroads?

It has been said that this line should have been built to Fort McMurray in order to prevent a line being built into that country from Battleford. Well, whatever railroads we build here, we can't prevent other people of other provinces building what railways they choose. There is now a railroad near the boundary of Saskatchewan coming north-west to Battleford which could easily be extended to St. Paul de Metis, making this rich territory tributary to Battleford. So don't forget the danger of this territory being cut-off which is of much more immediate value than the Fort McMurray country.

Not Immediately Necessary.

I am quite agreed that in due time there will be a railway to Fort McMurray between Edmonton and Fort McMurray. It is necessary but not immediately so. The road we are getting now to Athabasca Landing should have been completed four years ago, and had this been the case, it would have benefitted greatly the Peace River country and the Fort McMurray country.

I am not, then entitled to be held up on the grounds that I have not been in favor of the development of

the northern country because I did not favor the Alberta and Great Waterways railway.

Mr. Oliver concluded his address by declaring that he was convinced that Edmonton was on the side of

Laurier, Progress and Reciprocity as it had ever been since 1896

The meeting closed with hearty cheers for Oliver and Laurier and the singing of the National Anthem.

POUR LA JUSTICE

par Henri Bourassa.

I

HISTOIRE DE LA LÉGISLATION SCOLAIRE AU NORD-OUEST

Messieurs les présidents, (1)

Mesdames,

Messieurs,

Ainsi que vient de vous le déclarer mon excellent ami, M. Vallières, nous vous avons invités à venir, ce soir, entendre, non pas des diatribes et des injures, mais l'histoire de cette partie des Territoires du Nord-Ouest que le parlement du Canada se propose d'annexer à la province de Manitoba, et l'exposé du problème politique qui s'y rattache.

Je réclame d'avance votre indulgence ; car, dans la première partie de ce discours, je veux faire l'énumération exacte, avec textes à l'appui, des actes constitutionnels sur lesquels nous nous appuyons pour dire que le parlement fédéral n'a pas le droit de violer un principe de justice et un engagement moral contracté, il y a trente-sept ans, avec tout le peuple du Canada.

Afin que les déterminations que nous prendrons ce soir ne soient inspirées ni par la passion, ni par le sentiment, mais par la raison et par la conviction motivée, cette étude, tout aride qu'elle soit, est nécessaire.

Dans cette même salle, il y a sept ans bientôt, j'avais l'honneur de vous présenter une partie du même exposé l'historique et de la même argumentation légale, au sujet de l'adoption des lois constitutionnelles des provinces de l'Alberta et de la Saskatchewan.

(1) MM. S.-D. Vallières et Charles Langlois.

C'est, en réalité, la même cause que nous défendons aujourd'hui. En 1905, le parlement fédéral faillit partiellement à l'engagement moral qu'il se propose de violer complètement aujourd'hui, si le peuple du Canada ne l'en empêche à temps.

HISTOIRE CONSTITUTIONNELLE ET LEGALE DES TERRI- TOIRES

En 1867, dans l'Acte même de la constitution, à l'article 146, le parlement impérial donna au cabinet britannique le droit d'annexer par arrêté ministériel la Terre de Rupert et le territoire du Nord-Ouest à la nouvelle confédération canadienne, pourvu que la Chambre des Communes et le Sénat du Canada en fissent la demande par une adresse conjointe.

Le 16 et le 17 décembre 1867, les deux chambres du parlement canadien votaient cette adresse.

Le 31 juillet 1868, la reine d'Angleterre sanctionnait un statut impérial, intitulé le "Rupert's Land Act", permettant d'annexer à la Confédération canadienne la Terre de Rupert et toutes les terres dont la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson avait jusque-là réclaté la propriété.

Le 22 mars 1869, sir Georges-Etienne Cartier et l'honorable M. William Macdougall, au nom du Canada, et sir Stafford Northcote, gouverneur de la Compagnie, signaient une première convention déterminant les termes et con-

